

**Testimony of
City of Detroit Department of Public Works Director Alfred Jordan**

**Before the
Michigan House of Representatives Energy and Technology Committee**

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Chairman Mayes ... Distinguished members of the House Energy and Technology Committee ... Good afternoon and thank you for this opportunity to address you on House Bill 5334.

My name is Alfred Jordan. ... I am director of the Detroit Department of Public Works. ... On behalf of Detroit Mayor Dave Bing and the residents of Michigan's largest city, I first want to thank you, Chairman Mayes, for sponsoring this innovative legislation, which seeks to amend state law to permit the disposal of yard clippings in a landfill licensed as a ***"landfill energy production facility."***

The City of Detroit supports this endeavor but respectfully asks your honorable body to amend House Bill 5334 to also allow for incineration of yard clippings. Please know that said amendment would comport with – not detract from – the thrust of House Bill 5334, which, according to the House Fiscal Agency's analysis, aims to ***"recover (methane) gas ... for the generation of electricity, a direct fuel use, or any other use as a substitute for conventional fuels."***

Here's why:

- The City of Detroit currently incinerates its municipal solid waste at the Greater Detroit Resource Recovery Authority, which is licensed as a Refuse Derived Fuel (RDF) Facility.
- As is the case with solid-waste landfills, incinerators currently cannot accept yard clippings, pursuant existing Michigan law, specifically the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Act.

Rather, yard clippings must be collected separately by – and at more expense to – local units of government.

- House Bill 5334 would make an exception for yard clippings to be sent to landfills with a gas collection system, recognizing the gas would be intended for ***"on-site or "off-site energy use."***
- Note that GDRRA right now is the primary supplier of steam to numerous Downtown Detroit businesses. Indeed, it provides low cost steam to Detroit

Thermal and that steam is used to heat and cool more than 162 buildings, including the venerable Fox Theatre, the Renaissance Center, the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Detroit Medical Center.

- The Detroit Department of Public Works currently collects roughly 6,000 tons of yard clippings annually that, if it could simply be incinerated, would augment this steam energy in Downtown Detroit and possibly could be converted into electricity as well.
- Amending state law to permit incineration of yard clippings would also save consumers and locals money ...
 - Consumers because they wouldn't have to purchase those special paper bags for yard waste.
 - And locals because municipal workers could load all refuse on *one* truck instead of having to dispatch a separate vehicle to collect yard clippings. Consider, for example, that Detroit spends about \$910,000 a year on the collection, hauling and processing of municipal solid waste.

Given these tough economic times, which are symbolized by Michigan's worst-in-the-nation unemployment rate and steep cuts in municipal revenue sharing payments - \$30 million in Detroit alone for the state's current fiscal year – should not the Legislature at least consider measures to mitigate residents and locals' costs?

- Lastly, note that burning yard clippings would have no adverse effect on GDRRA emissions or Michigan Air Reporting Systems.

I could continue but do not wish to belabor the point. Simply put: Please amend House Bill 5334 to allow for incineration of yard clippings. It's the right and fair thing to do.

Again, thank you for your time and consideration of my remarks. I appreciate your forbearance and welcome any questions from the committee.